



Daniel Ross Schmalenberg

March 3, 1946 - December 30, 2016

Daniel (Dan) Ross Schmalenberg was born in Detroit, MI on March 3, 1946, to Rudolf and Margaret (Forest) Schmalenberg. On Friday, December 30, 2016, he entered into eternal life after five months at the Grand Traverse Pavilions.

Dan grew up in Grosse Pointe, MI with his parents, sister Linda and much extended family. He graduated from Grosse Point South in 1964 and moved on to receive his business degree in 1969 from Central Michigan University where he was president of his fraternity, a chapter of Phi Kappa Tau.

After college graduation, Dan married Judith Leamen and began to work at the family owned business, R&S Engineering in Warren, MI. Around that time he began a four year commitment with the Michigan National Guard where he served as a paymaster. Later, in 1973, he and Judy moved to Gaylord, MI where Dan had been recruited by Marks Management to open one of the first McDonalds restaurants in northern Michigan, the beginning of a long and satisfying career.

In 1975, Dan and Judy began their family with the birth of their daughter, Christa Ann, followed by Jeffrey Ross in 1979. Then, and now, Dan's children were the light of his life. Their names appear repeatedly in his prayer journals over the years. Even after he was severely cognitively impaired with Lewy Body Dementia he would ask "How are the kids doing?" He always went the extra mile for his children, stepchildren and grandchildren.

In 1983, Dan was promoted to Director of Operations for Marks Management Corporation with oversight of numerous McDonalds throughout northern Michigan and he moved his family to Traverse City. Most regrettably his marriage did not survive that move, but he put great effort into being a father to his children.

In 1990, Dan married Sherry Lou (McGinnis) Carlson. During their years together, Dan's 22 year career with Marks Management ended and Dan worked the next five years as Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity- Grand Traverse. Dan was in his element when

helping others and he and Habitat flourished during his leadership. When he retired from Habitat for Humanity in 1999, he spent a year helping build a home for one of his four stepsons. Not too long after, in 2001, Dan Jonkhoff recruited him to join the work family at Reynolds Jonkhoff Funeral Home where he remained until 2011. At Reynolds-Jonkhoff, because of his keen technical skills, he was known as “the Wizard” until it became apparent that Lewy Body Dementia was slowly taking his mind.

Throughout his lifetime, Dan was a quiet and efficient leader wherever he served. In Gaylord, he was very active with the Gaylord Jaycees and served on the Alpenfest board. In Traverse City, he was an active leader with Habitat for Humanity, Traverse Bay United Methodist Church, Senior Companions, Northern Michigan Emmaus Community, National Ski Patrol, Leadership Grand Traverse and Parkinson’s Network North.

Dan’s happiest times were spent helping build, fix or provide whatever was needed for his family. He was often the family photographer and he loved sailing his Catalina 25 and tooling around in his little blue Miata with Sherry Lou and the Tip of the Mitt Miata Club. Despite the progression of his disease, there were many joyful years spent with family, friends, travel, volunteering and helping whoever Dan could find to help. Even when Sherry Lou could no longer care for Dan at home, Dan spent his last five months at the Grand Traverse Pavilions trying to figure out who and how he could help. As Sherry Lou visited him each day he would frequently ask, “who can we help today?”

Dan was preceded in death by his parents, grandparents, and numerous aunts and uncles.

Along with his wife Sherry Lou, left to carry on without him are his children, Christa (Aaron) Peoples and Jeffrey (Emily Walter) Schmalenberg; and Sherry Lou’s children Gregory, Jeffrey, Dale, and Chris Carlson; his sister, Linda (Rick) Canada and her family; and the mother of his children, Judith Leaman (John Gross). He leaves a legacy of love and generosity of spirit to his seven grandchildren: Keegan, Madeline and Lauren Peoples; Nina Schmalenberg; and Tyler, Ben and Sadie Carlson. He was a kind, generous, faithful, loving, honest husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend. He made the world a better place.

A debt of gratitude is owed the Elm Unit at the Grand Traverse Pavilions who loved and cared for him in his final months.

Friends and family may visit at Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home from 5 to 8 pm on Wednesday January 4, 2017. A service to celebrate Dan's life will be held at Traverse Bay United Methodist Church on Thursday, January 5, 2017 at 10:30 am. Burial will be in Grand Traverse Memorial Gardens.

For those who so choose, memorials may be directed to Parkinsons Network North, P. O.

Box 5734, Traverse City, MI 49696 (<http://www.gtaparkinsonsgroup.org/donations>) or to the local Alzheimers Association, Greater Michigan Chapter, 25200 Telegraph Rd. Ste 100, Southfield, MI 48033 (<http://www.alz.org/gmc>)

Cemetery

Grand Traverse Memorial Gardens

3575 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI, 49684

Events

JAN 4 **Visitation** 05:00PM - 08:00PM
Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home
305 Sixth St, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

JAN 5 **Celebration of Life** 10:30AM
Traverse Bay United Methodist Church
1200 Ramsdell Street, Traverse City, MI, US,
49684

Comments



“ Sherry,

What a beautiful tribute Dan. I wish I'd known him. I hope to still see you at group. You always share such insight and you give me hope.

Joan Fitzgibbon
Jefitzgibbon@charter.net

Joan Fitzgibbon - January 19, 2017 at 08:20 AM



“ Thank you so much, Joan. It has been my pleasure to become acquainted with you and the other members of our Dementia Support Group. I don't know how much I will be there going forward as I am attending the Hospice Grief group now. You and Pat are in my thoughts and prayers. I am blessed to share hope with you. Please keep in touch.

Sherry Schmalenberg - January 28, 2017 at 04:17 AM



“ Sherry:

Is there a way to get you a OKT photo?

steven dornbos - January 10, 2017 at 05:40 PM



“ Sorry to be so slow, Steve. I haven't thought to come on this site since Dan's passing. I don't know what OKT is, but I receive photos all the time by text, e-mail, and on my Facebook page. Feel free to friend me, text me or e-mail me. My phone is 231-645-0000 and my e-mail is slmcs067@me.com. You will find other of your fraternity brothers on my Facebook page if you are on Facebook. Thank you for your various supportive gestures. Very much appreciated. Blessings to you and yours!

Sherry Schmalenberg - January 28, 2017 at 04:13 AM



“ Thoughts & prayers & peace to you Sherry. You are an amazing women & you gave Dan the best of the best. I admired your strength thru it all. Life is like that box of chocolates....May God bless your future life Autumn

autumn mier - January 06, 2017 at 05:36 AM



“ Thank you, Autumn. You are a great encourager. One day at a time.

Sherry Schmalenberg - January 06, 2017 at 06:50 PM



“ Thoughts and prayers to you and your family, Sherry. I was impressed by your strength and bravery over these last many months as I'm sure it was not easy. Hugs!

Amy (Johnson) Hoge

Amy Hoge - January 03, 2017 at 11:49 AM



“ Thank you, Amy. It's a bitter pill, but he is released from a horrid disease and I'm glad he is no longer suffering in any way. Thanks for caring.

Sherry Schmalenberg - January 03, 2017 at 03:16 PM



“ Sherry,

So sorry to hear about Dan. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Beth Richter

Beth Richter - January 03, 2017 at 11:49 AM



“ Thank you, Beth. We are blessed by your thoughts and prayers.

Sherry Schmalenberg - January 04, 2017 at 06:02 AM



“ Sherry, so sorry to learn of Dan's passing. My thoughts are with you. Carroll Baldwin

Carroll Baldwin - January 02, 2017 at 07:52 PM



“ Thank you, Carroll. People who care are such a great part of the healing process...for which I am most grateful.

sherry schmalenberg - January 03, 2017 at 05:03 AM



“ Dear Sherry, I am very sorry for your loss of Daniel. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

Joann Anderson - January 02, 2017 at 03:53 PM



“ Thank you, JoAnn. I'm glad I had him for as long as I did. He was a wonderful husband for 27 years. Blessings to you!

Sherry Schmalenberg - January 02, 2017 at 07:30 PM



“ Dan was one of a kind. I could not have asked for a better Step-Dad. I'm incredibly grateful for the love, respect, and care he provided my Mother.

Chris Carlson - January 01, 2017 at 08:55 PM



“ We were all blessed beyond anything we expected or deserved. Love me, love my children...doesn't always happen.

Sherry Schmalenberg - January 02, 2017 at 04:21 AM



“ Dear Sherry, I am so sorry to hear of Dan's passing. I have thought of you both over the last few months, and know how difficult this time must have been for you. You were the loving devoted wife and partner and I witnessed that strong commitment. The memories will be bittersweet as you reflect back on your lives together, but the love you shared, will sustain you. The obituary was a beautiful tribute to Dan. Take care my friend.

My prayers and love are with you Sherry,

Ruth Ann (Ruthie) Smith

Ruth Ann Smith - January 01, 2017 at 07:30 PM



“ Oh, Ruthie! I have thought of you often and fondly. We will have to catch up when all is said and done. Your kind words are a mirror back to you and George. Love you, sweet friend.

Sherry Schmalenberg - January 02, 2017 at 04:23 AM



“ To My Fraternity Brother & His Family:

We met and became Brothers in 1967 and remember his leadership in 1969 as we were preparing to purchase our "Frat House". Class act, level headed, and just a great guy. Many memories from the late 60's. My thoughts and prayers go out to the Family. RIP my friend and Brother

Steven Dornbos Class of 1970

Steven Dornbos - January 01, 2017 at 03:05 PM



“ He spoke of you often, Steve, and always wanted to look you up...energy was lacking. But you were a great memory, too.

Sherry Schmalenberg - January 02, 2017 at 04:26 AM



“ Sherry and Family Members, I am so very sorry for your loss, however, Dan's Spirit remains with all of us. His smiling face will always be remembered along with his friendly manner and his gentle ways. He touched so many lives he will continue to "live" on. Blessings never leave us. All of you continue to be in my prayers and my heart. Love, Wilma Blood

Wilma Blood - December 31, 2016 at 08:55 PM



“ Thank you for sharing, Wilma, and for your loving support and encouragement always.
Sherry Schmalenberg - January 01, 2017 at 11:58 AM



“ While Dan was my brother-in-law, we had many happy and memorable times in Gaylord and Dearborn, Michigan. He was the first in our family to have this huge Sony video tape recorder, hoisted on his shoulder and asking everyone gathered to smile and act natural.
Fun times and great memories of a wonderful man. -- Terrance Leaman

Terrance Leaman - December 31, 2016 at 07:44 PM



“ Being the one to hoist the camera stayed with Dan throughout the years until LBD robbed him of the ability to be the family photographer. He was still talking about his camera up to a few weeks before leaving us all. Thanks for remembering, Terry. PS: He made a point of having the latest technology first!
Sherry Schmalenberg - January 01, 2017 at 11:56 AM



“ Remembering an afternoon sailing with Dan and Sherry in the last few years. Hours of story swapping, enjoying the sun and a beautiful breeze on Traverse Bay. It was an honor and a pleasure to hear of his adventures under sail.

Cappy and Scott Potter - December 31, 2016 at 03:51 PM



“ Thank you, Scott and Cappy! You brightened his day when his world had become quite narrow....mine, too!

Sherry Schmalenberg - December 31, 2016 at 07:26 PM



“ I just remember meeting Dan once, briefly, at your home. Sweet man. How good it must have been to have him share your life for these many years. Thank you for sharing his life with us in this obituary.

Nancy Davidson

Nancy Davidson - January 01, 2017 at 05:41 AM



“ I was fortunate enough to work with both Sherry (Empire Bank) and Dan (Reynolds-Jonkhoff). Dan was a lovely lovely man. Such a gentle, patient man, never without a smile and a cheerful, positive outlook. Dan and Sherry, the perfect couple and a blessing to many. Prayers to the family. Marie Zapf-Taylor

Marie Zapf Taylor - January 01, 2017 at 06:30 AM